

Looking Forward

By Tom Palkon

Like many companies, the Water Quality Assn.'s (WQA) Gold Seal Product Testing and Certification Program met projected expectations for 2010, but the recession definitely altered growth projections. Even with the slowdown, 2010 proved to be a busy year for WQA's new laboratory, which has eliminated long testing queues. Test bench automation and the increased number of test stations allow the lab to handle any size client, certification project or R&D study.

What you can expect to see from WQA in 2011

Gold Seal Activities

The new lab allowed WQA's Gold Seal Program to incorporate new quality control enhancements. New analytical equipment such as inductively coupled plasma mass spectroscopy and gas chromatography mass spectroscopy have allowed the laboratory to ensure the accuracy of the data produced. Also, WQA has brought some of the toxicology work required by the testing standards in house. WQA's Toxicology Review Panel is responsible for ensuring that WQA's risk assessments are accurate and are attempting to harmonize risk assessment data between all product certification agencies in North America. These improvements, along with revisions to WQA's Quality Control

Procedures, give companies, regulators and consumers confidence in WQA's certification and testing work.

Standards Activities

As usual, 2010 also involved standards writing and revising activities. WQA staff and the industry have been working with the International Assn. of Plumbing Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) to develop a scale reduction performance standard so that water softeners and other non-ion exchange technologies can be tested and evaluated for scale reduction performance on water heaters. This group has been working for more than two years but appears to be close to completion. A draft test protocol has been established and validation work should begin the first quarter of 2011. The new standard could be released in late 2011.

Green Plumbing Codes

IAPMO and the International Code Council (ICC) have been busy completing "green" codes for the building and plumbing industries. IAPMO has developed green supplements to the Uniform Plumbing Code; the Uniform Mechanical Code; and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers Inc. Standard 189 for the "Design of High-Performance Green Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings." ICC has published the second version of its International Green Construction Code. Both codes reference products used in drinking water treatment and both organizations have invited WQA to participate in the development and revisions to their green code writing processes.

Low Lead

Most companies are now familiar with California's AB 1953 law, which took effect in 2010. This law requires any product that comes into contact with drinking water to contain no more than 0.25% lead. Certification bodies reacted quickly to develop product certification programs that would comply with the new law. WQA currently certifies products to certification document ORD.09002 to demonstrate compliance with this law. NSF Intl. is also in the final development stages of publishing a product testing standard that can be used to comply with the law. WQA is also closely following a national bill that proposes to make these low-lead requirements mandatory throughout the U.S.

International Standards

Companies selling products in South America should be familiar with Brazil's new mandated product testing and certification requirements. The Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade National Institute of Metrology, Standards and Industrial Quality now makes it mandatory to have drinking water treatment products certified by an approved Brazilian certification body prior to sale in Brazil. WQA has partnered with Instituto Falcão Bauer to assist any North American clients with product certification to comply with the new law. WQA will be authorized to conduct the factory inspections of companies located outside Brazil for Falcão Bauer product certification.

High pH Lead Testing

WQA has been working with industry members to resolve some inconsistencies that laboratories and companies are finding when their products are tested for lead reduction in accordance to the NSF/ANSI 53 testing procedure. WQA established a task force in March 2010 to begin researching some of the inconsistent test results laboratories found when evaluating gravity and pressurized filters to the high pH lead testing protocol. Concerns with the current protocol have been outlined and the task force's findings were presented



The WQA streamlined its testing process for increased efficiency. Test bench automation and more test stations allow the lab to handle any size client.

to NSF Intl.'s Drinking Water Treatment Units standards writing joint committee. The joint committee agreed to re-establish the lead task force to review the concerns.

EPA WaterSense

WQA has been working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) WaterSense program staff to encourage the development of a WaterSense standard for water softeners and reverse osmosis (RO) systems. EPA has completed its initial investigation and on Nov. 22, 2010, announced a notification of intent (NOI) to develop a specification to label water-efficient, high-performing cation exchange water softeners. With this NOI, WaterSense outlines the efficiency and performance criteria it intends to include and the technical issues that need to be defined and resolved. To view the NOI, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/products/watersofteners.html.

Plans and Predictions for 2011

WQA is in the final stages of completing a build-out of the facility's second floor, which will now be dedicated to Gold Seal product certification staff. The second floor will also be the new location for WQA's state-of-the-art analytical equipment. After this renovation is complete, the laboratory

will occupy the entire lower level of WQA's international headquarters.

Product Certification Schemes

The Gold Seal Program and laboratory also plan to implement a new laboratory information and management (LIM) system to improve quality control and allow companies quicker access to laboratory reports and test data. Staff is in the process of simplifying the certification process and forms. The following product certification schemes are being developed:

- Drinking Water Treatment Units;
- Drinking Water Components;
- Drinking Water Additives;
- Pool and Spa Equipment;
- Bottled Water;
- Food Equipment; and
- International Standards.

Sustainability

The drinking water treatment industry is in desperate need of green performance standards. As sustainability efforts in the U.S. continue to increase, the industry has to prevent "greenwashing." There are different green labels on a number of products, so the industry feels it is time for a green product certification program. Two task forces have been established to initiate this process.

Three green initiatives are currently in progress at the WQA.

First, the EPA WaterSense program for softeners has reached the NOI phase mentioned earlier. After EPA completes its development of a standard for water softeners, WQA will encourage the WaterSense Program to proceed with a standard for RO systems. Second, WQA established a Green Activated Carbon Task Force last year, which is in the process of developing criteria for green labeling of activated carbon. Finally, WQA has established a Green Task Force for the development of product specifications to label a product as green. Residential water filters, softeners and RO systems will be addressed in the initial standard.

Enhancing Certification

One of the problems that WQA recognizes when working with clients is that many times they do not have the staff necessary to keep all their product certification projects organized, resulting in the need to rush specific test requests, the loss of product listings and incorrect product bracketing, ultimately resulting in higher certification costs and regulatory stress. WQA is in the process of developing the new Certification 360 program, which is designed to eliminate these problems.

WQA's Gold Seal Program also plans to continue working closely

with WQA International Task Forces that have been established to increase WQA's presence around the world.

Companies that participate in the EPA Energy Star Program will be noticing some changes in 2011. The program will be turning over the product testing and certification procedures to ANSI-accredited third-party certification bodies. At this time, WQA is going through the necessary process with EPA Energy Star and ANSI to ensure that its current clients will be able to use the Gold Seal Program for Energy Star compliance.

The past year appeared to be a turning point for the industry and the economy. 2011 should bring renewed confidence and industry growth. Companies need to make sure that when the economy begins growing again that they are ready to grow with it. Don't let lack of product certification be the step that slows down a product getting to market. *wqp*

Tom Palkon is director of product certification for WQA. Palkon can be reached at tpalkon@wqa.org or at 630.505.0160.

For more information on this subject write in 1006 on the reader service card or visit www.wqpmag.com/lm.cfm/wq011106.

Thomas Products LTD.
Pride, Quality & Service Since 1974

Liquid Level Sensors
Great for use in...

- RO Systems
- UV Disinfection Units
- Water Vending Machines
- Water Status With Chemical Feed Pumps

Chemical Feed Pump Controls

- UL Rec. 120 vac 1/2 HP
- Completely Prewired

Model 4000

Model 4400

Model 1804w Pat. no. 5,162,624

Model 1801 Pat. no. 5,162,624

Thomas Products LTD. 800.666.9101
Designers & Manufacturers Of Quality Level & Flow Sensors www.thomasprod.com

Write in 755

GAME CHANGER.

ENPRESS introduces its Ultra Filtration System, a powerful new tool for your water treatment tool box. It's easy to install and maintain. Treats colloids, bacteria, cysts, viruses and tannins. High throughput flow rates with 0.02 micron filtration and low waste discharge. Standard Control Valve. Technology you understand.

Just another example of the innovative thinking you've come to expect from ENPRESS.® To find out how we can help you, call 866.859.9274 today!

ENPRESS LLC
Where Innovation Flows™

Made with Owens Corning Materials
THE PINK PANTHER™ & © 1964 - 2009 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc.
All Rights Reserved

© 2010 ENPRESS LLC
This product is not certified as a microbiological purifier and should not be applied as a standalone disinfection solution for microbiologically unsafe water.

Write in 754